

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 674.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1876.

PRICE 1½d.

IF.

Most of the greatest works of nature are done by the humblest instruments; and the history of individual man follows the same laws as that which builds mountains and raises continents. Very few sudden and isolated catastrophes come into one's life, all things being linked one with another, and as a rule, beginning with the simplest germ of a chance event. If. Life is a succession of Ifs. The visit where we meet our 'fate,' the book by which we are inflamed with the ardent longing of youth for such and such a profession; the conversation whereby we are first led to consider the desirability of embarking in that concern which makes or breaks our fortune; the voyage where we are shipwrecked and lose our all or maybe our life; all these great events whereby we live in prosperity or die in distress come about as the sequence of that simple word If. If I had not gone; If I had not seen; then the whole course of my life would have been changed and the page of private history headed with my name would have been differently worded and differently illustrated.

For the marriages that are made as the natural result of neighbourhood, how many are due to this imp of chance, this intrusive and intermeddling little If? You, stationed in the far East, are invited to spend one of a choice of months at your uncle's, when you are at home for your two years' leave. You choose at hazard that which a girl from the far north has been invited to pass at her school-fellow's. You two meet, fall in love, and marry. But for that If—If you had not chosen this special month and had chosen any other you would never have met. The lines of your lives were traced on different planes altogether, and but for the chance of a coincident invitation the whole of your after-histories would have been arranged and transacted apart. She would not have married a man whose destinies lay in India; she would not have lost her health, been obliged to come home with her baby, have lingered a little while, pale and tremulous, at the

dear old manse, and then have gone to sleep with her child in the quiet churchyard for ever. If she had married Donald yonder, the young laird who had loved her from a boy, but who, good and brave as he was, had not known how to strike her fancy—but if—that fateful If!—she had married him and had lived as of old in the fresh free mountain air, she would have probably been the joyful mother of many children, and would have lived into old age. And had you married that fascinating little Creole whom you were 'spooning' before you went to Cromer, you would have had a wife who would have withstood the heat of Agra, and you too would have had a happy life. Instead of which she must needs go off with her handsome consul to the chill climate of Canada, where she was nipped like a hothouse plant set out on a winter's night, and fell into death through the cold as your poor mountain nymph fell into death through the heat. The lives that would have been born into the world had those two marriages been other than they were, make an appreciable sum of difference in current history; while who can count up all that would have been and would not have been, had things been arranged in an exactly contrary direction, and the woof and warp of this strange web of life been dyed of different colours and led through different 'cards.' If!—grim builder of tombs, silent architect of temples for the nations and of cottage homes for the lowly people alike; If—by whom the cradle is filled and the hearth left desolate and the great books of history are written, together with the little poems of private lovers and the faint dirges of unnoted sorrows—what misery might be prevented could we but see the face of the fate that hides behind that veil—could we but read the lines that follow on the preface!

If. If the Duke d'Alva had never been born? If Mary Stuart's boy-husband had not died, and Scotland had been ruled by a viceroys who understood the temper of the times and sympathised with the heart of the people? If Mary Tudor had borne a fine lusty boy who had united Henry's force

and Philip's tenacity, English courage and Spanish bigotry? If Madame Mère had died before she gave life to the babe whom she called Napoleon; or if he, *le petit* himself, running with uncertain feet about the rooms and corridors of that Corsican house had slipped on the stairs and broken his two-year-old neck at the bottom? If the son of Queen Hortense had married some rich soap-boiler's daughter in Tyburnia, and had renounced his dreams of ambition for the realities of good living—the potentiality of a throne for membership at White's and extensive dealings at Tattersall's? If Sir Robert Peel had not gone out riding that day? and if Cavour had had an English physician? Well—if—if—all these things had been or had not been the whole history of Europe would have been changed; and with this general history the life or death, the misery or well-being of countless individuals, and the still greater suppression or the yet more glorious recognition of the Truth by which men are made rich and glad. Even we Britons ourselves, less dependent than any nation in Europe on the life or doings of one man, even we would have modified much of our public action had the astute leader of the Liberals remained at the helm for a few years longer, going fair and softly on the way of reform, neither frightening the timid nor enraging the prejudiced, but knowing how to bide his time and when to hold his hand, as well as when to set all sail and make a bold push for the destined port. And though 'Italia Una' has done well, God bless her! and walked wisely on more than one difficult path, yet it is no ingratitude to those who have conducted her to say that, had her great master-spirit lived, she would have done even better than she has done. To recognise possibilities is not to shut one's eyes to the things which are actual and present; and to mourn for Cavour is not to despise his successors.

What odd chances come about by this If! If my friend E— had not dined at a certain house one day she would not have heard a discussion about Paris and the Easter holidays, and she would not therefore have been taken over by her friends. If her friends had not chosen for their visit to Versailles the very day when she could not accompany them, she would not have had time or opportunity for paying a visit on her own account. In which case she would have heard nothing about the projected sojourn at Trouville for the summer. If she had not gone to Trouville she would not have seen her old school-fellow and favourite, so long lost sight of, designing to winter in Florence. If she had not gone to Florence she would not have taken pretty Beatrice, just out of school and *découverte* for the next year. If Beatrice had not gone to Florence she would not have met with young Hardman from California, making the tour of the old world before returning to the new; hence she would not have married him; hence she would not have induced my friend E—, a lonely old maid who had grown to love her sweet charge like her own daughter, to go out with her and her kindly husband. And if E— had not gone out she would not have visited the Yosemite Valley that day when the leaders bolted, the stage came to grief, and the poor dear was thrown to the ground, with concussion of the brain and the end of all things—of works and days and time and change for ever!

The whole chain was formed of a series of Ifs, any one of which wanting would have set all the rest awry, and would have woven life into quite another pattern of events. But who knows if a more beautiful pattern? For even to poor E—, who came to her end thereby, was not death the sweet god of rest and release rather than the ghastly King of Terrors?

The magnitude of the chances lying in what are apparently the most unimportant circumstances is one of the appalling considerations of life. It is as if we were beset by gigantic unknown forces which manipulate us according to their will; we all the while ignorant of their presence and powerless to prevent their action. No amount of caution secures us; and no defence by foresight, calculation, or distrust avails. The first link of all our future wealth or poverty, happiness or misery, is forged at nothing more important than a commonplace dinner or a five o'clock tea. Are we never to accept an invitation to dinner because of the unknown force waiting for us there? Is five o'clock tea to be to us like the Eleusinian mysteries to the uninitiated—a thing terrible and forbidden? If we were to let that fear of the hidden potentialities lying beneath unimportant action get possession of us, life would become impossible, and our only place then would be a monastery or a convent, with the heavy doors duly barred against freedom and the world, and the dim dull windows looking only into the safe cloisters of the confraternity.

If, Through the sighing of the sorrowful and the groanings of the oppressed breaks in the sweet laughter of the young, sound triumphantly the hymns of the glad. It is not all sorrow by which we are surrounded, and the chances by which our future is moulded do not spring out from misfortune, trouble, disaster only. Sometimes these dumb blind drifting chances lead us into fairer pastures than those which we have hitherto known, and the stranger guests entertained at our hearth may be angels unawares as well as crafty men or cruel demons. Floundering in the drag-net of an unscrupulous exploiter—as so often happens to those who are ignorant of the methods of business and too upright themselves to suspect others of evil—poor Gudgeon, marked down for prey, chances to dine with his friend Manifold at his club. Here he meets with a brisk man of the world, well versed in all those crooked ways of life which he terms more graphically than elegantly Dodges—Dodges all in a lump together; drag-nets of exploiters, bubbles blown in the City, and grappling-hooks cast into deed and share by trustees without conscience and speculative solicitors who are 'certain to be able to pay it back when wanted.' Gudgeon has begun to be uneasy about his liabilities; doubtful of the wisdom of his investments; anxious to swim to the mouth of that drag-net and swim himself clear of those inclosing meshes. His intelligence is asserting itself over his more high-souled but less rational habit of trust. He is beginning to see a little light where formerly he had been voluntarily blind; and that little light is shewing him some very ugly things indeed. He unbosoms to his friend Manifold, and Manifold looks grave; when presently there bustles up, rosy, well-washed, brisk, alert, this very bloodhound of Dodges—the clairvoyant of rascality—Ferret, the famous Ferret, who seems to know by intuition when a scheme is sound or what he calls 'fishy'—the

word is his, not ours—and whose advice delivered gratis is worth any man's fortune to buy. Manifold hails him, and the perplexities of Gudgeon are detailed. In an instant Ferret has the scent. 'The thing is a swindle, my dear sir, and you must back out of it without loss of time. At the best you must lose, but you need not lose so much as you inevitably will if you remain in the concern. Back out, and blow your burnt fingers cool.'

Gudgeon takes his advice and backs out; and thus saves himself and the partner of his bosom, his little ones and his old mother from absolute destitution—and all by the chance of an If. If he had not walked down Bond Street that fourth of May he would not have met Manifold; and Manifold, who never remembers any one when out of sight, would not have asked him to dine at his club the next day. Not dining at his club, Gudgeon would not have had the chance of a confidential talk in the first place, nor of an introduction to Ferret in the second; and if he had not met Ferret just when he did, and withdrawn just when he did, he would have been laid by the heels helpless; for the bubble burst, and the poor creatures in the drag-net were landed, and the exploiter grew fat while his victims waxed lean, and some of them disappeared altogether. That was an If to be emblazoned by Gudgeon in gold and purple on the whitest and softest vellum to be found; an If which saved one at least out of a crowd lost, and where but for it, that one would have been lost too.

What pleasant days have come about by Ifs!—what charming companionships have sprung, like flowers blooming from a wind-sown seed, from the merest caprice of fate, the smallest, most insignificant little turn of the wheel, with If as the handle working! A day spent in Hertfordshire was the seed which bore the fruit of an autumn's shooting in the Highlands; a garden party at the Lakes culminated in a season passed in town; a ball in Grosvenor Square began the acquaintance which ended, so far as separate acquaintance went, in St George's Hanover Square; though alas! St George's Hanover Square, for one, destroyed all the preliminaries already gone through in the same direction for another. For young eyes are bright and young hearts sometimes unsteady; and Mary was too pretty a bridesmaid not to be admired, while John was too much in love not to be jealous. And when that handsome captain with his tawny moustache and lordly manner, appropriated the pretty bridesmaid to himself, in the manner of a rover bold reserving the best prize for his own share, that rather sullen and desperately jealous lover of hers took fire and fright, and never having had a very firm hold on the girl's heart, lost that which he had, by reason of his foolish temper and unwise display. And so it came about that Mary escaped from his grasp altogether, and the captain carried her off in the end as his own. That was a bad If for John! And yet maybe not so bad after all? Better no wife than one unloving and reluctant; and, as marriage does not heal a jealous temper any more than it makes a sulky one magnanimous, neither does it make a pretty woman anything but an admirable thing to look at, and, if intelligent and pleasant, an agreeable one to talk to. If John had married?—there would then most probably have been a very long and weary way

of misunderstanding to get through before they would have come out into the serene light of peace and confidence, if indeed they ever did. They might have done so badly together that they might have been obliged to separate; or Mary might have pined away and died of that deadly disease known as despair but which is called a broken heart; or John might have taken to drink to drown his self-made cares, or Mary to flirtation of an audacious sort to give him cause for his discomfort. A whole world of eventualities would have hung upon that If, which now hung on the If of the other side. If Ada Crofton had not gone to the ball in Grosvenor Square she would never have met with Morton Ward; Mary would not have been invited to her wedding as her bride's-maid; Captain Duncan would not have been 'best-man' to her sweet seniority on the maids' side; and the whole of the after chapter would not have been written—with poor gloomy miserable John going off to Charleston and dying of yellow fever within the year.

If my eldest boy had not bathed in the river that day when heated with cricket, he would not have had rheumatic fever; he would not have been crippled for life; he would have followed the career which had been marked out for him, for which he had studied, and to which he had given his heart; and the army would have had as brave and handsome and high-minded an officer as could be found within the four seas. But he bathed; took a chill; had rheumatic fever, whereby he was crippled, helplessly, for life, and so had to throw up the Engineers, for which he had been preparing with so much zeal and certainty of brilliant success, and take to the law, which he detests and where he will never prosper. And if my younger boy had not met Mr Midshipman Easy, when staying for his holidays at his aunt's, in all probability he would not have been bitten with that fatal passion for the sea which resisted all counsel, all endeavour to control. For though denied the navy, and kept at school till the age was passed when he could be admitted, in the hope that it was but a fleeting boyish fancy, he slipped his moorings one dark night unknown to any one, and, in his admiration for what some one calls a prison with the chance of drowning super-added, shipped himself as a sailor before the mast on his sixteenth birthday. In this way it was that he began that life of unsettled adventure which has robbed his mother of a son, his country of a citizen, and taken from his career all solid value and satisfaction.

But If I had put him into the navy when he was a lad, according to his desire?

So the round goes on; and to the lives of us all comes ever that shaping and determining If by which good and ill flow together. But of what use to look back?—of what use to lament the inevitable?—to bewail the chance which has wrought out certainty? Wisdom and courage do much to correct the mistakes of ignorance, the misadventures of blind action. We live in a world hedged round on every side with barriers that no human power can overleap, no foresight overthrow; and the great events which spring from small causes meet us at all four corners. Of what use then to fret over the unalterable law? That If by which our dearest have been lost and ourselves wrecked, let it be to us as the unseen and irresistible Force

which governs us, unknown to ourselves how or why. And who but fools beat their heads against stone walls?—who but cowards weep for that which no tears can restore, and no bewailings remove?

THE ARAB WIFE.

A TALE OF THE POLYNESIAN SEAS.

CHAPTER VI.—DINNER.

It was about noon when we arrived at the castle. The place was crowded with bustling servants, and it was evident from what was going forward that the dinner would be a grand affair. I felt more at ease among the Arabs now that I had made my proofs, as the French say, and chattered away freely to all the young pirates who were loitering about. There were not many, for the majority were down at the jetty, superintending the unloading of the ghee, palm-oil, spices, and as much of the other goods as were to be landed. While in the midst of an animated description of the Dutchman's astonishment when we poured over on his decks, a black Seedi slave announced to Abou and myself that we were to take our noon-tide meal with Nizam; Abdallah, a cousin of Abou's, and an old Arab who acted as quartermaster on board Nizam's proa, were to be present also. Abdallah congratulated us on this. He said: 'Feringhi [Englishman], you will certainly receive a big present; a shawl perhaps, or a handsome tulwar, or maybe a pair of Arab pistols.'

'Well,' I said, 'what will you get?'

Abou answered for him: 'Abdallah will get that slave Maime he has been hankering for.'

At this there was a broad smile, and the accused answered back gaily: 'If Nizam chooses, there is room in my house for her.—Abou, what do you expect? Pinstres or slaves, or a proa, or what?'

Abou shook his head. 'I make no calculations, and least of all do I expect anything so extravagant as a proa. But we shall soon know, for the muezzin must be close at hand, and after prayers we shall ascend.'

Shortly after indeed, we heard the cry which calls good Mussulmans to prayers; and every one of those who had been chatting so gaily immediately knelt, bending the forehead to the ground nine times and repeating the attributes of Omnipotence.

We soon found ourselves in the reception-room of Al Reis, which was evidently decorated for the purpose. The floor had been covered with a fine Persian carpet of bright colours with quite a brilliant border, and a splendid praying-carpet had been spread over the old sofa. Al Reis was seated cross-legged on the sofa, and motioned us to take our seats on the soft carpet below, and receive food from his own hands. When I participated it was the last course of sweetmeats, and he told me that it was his intention to reward me far more amply than I could dream of, but that his future action was not yet quite clear before him. 'But in future,' said he, 'you must have a room in my house, and I will appoint a slave to look particularly after you and to obey your orders.'

When we had left the room, Abou beckoned to me that he had something of importance to say privately, so he led the way to the wild garden

that surrounded the castle. It was a magnificent spectacle, though it was so little cultivated, for it seemed like a fragment of a tropical jungle which had been dropped by the hand of an enchanter on the naked hill. The place was full of strange fruits and flowers: bushes with huge blossoms as big as a peck loaf; cacti for all the world like twining serpents, with the loveliest flowers; trees twined together like lovers in the Arab style; bowers of jessamine and wild grapes, date palms, talipot palms, cocoa palms, areca palms, bamboo palms, toddy palms—palms everywhere, of which I do not know even the names. In one corner stood a huge tree, whose branches rose from the trunk about twenty feet from the ground, and then swept clear downwards, making a perfect bell tent. There were cypresses, or something like them, with leaves of the darkest green, and oleanders as large as English lilac bushes. Even lilac bushes were here too, only they were large trees, fifty feet high, with slender graceful branches. There were mango trees as big as an oak; guava trees both white and red; jack trees, as we used to call them in India, though I believe they are a kind of bread-fruit. Others too with a stem as thin as the little finger, rising twenty feet in the air without a leaf, and terminating at the top with a circle of bright green leaflets. Underneath these were hosts of curious flowers. One thing, however, was wanting—there was no grass.

Abou led me to one of these bowers of jessamine and wild grapes, and commenced: 'My son, didn't you speak once of a kind of proa much faster than a proa that was used among the Giauours?'

'Yes,' I replied; 'if you mean the pirogue I spoke about a long time ago; but you thought the proa best.'

'I think so still,' said he; 'but Nizam is willing that you shall build one, if you can, and he will give it to me for my own.'

'Well, but what am I to build it of?'

'Whatever you like; you can take what materials you choose—you can have the pick of the whole island. You can do just what you choose. If you build it, I am to command it for myself; and whatever prizes I make, you shall always have the first and best share, you may depend on that.'

'O Abou, I'll be glad to build it as well as I can, for the sake of all the kindness you have shewn me, not for the sake of anything I can make of it. Only I don't know much about boat-building, though I remember what my father told me about the pirogues. You'll have to help me, and get the best proa-builders to help me; and then I believe I'll be able to turn out the fastest and the safest vessel that ever sailed these seas.'

Abou here grasped my hands warmly, and began to dilate upon the splendid times we would have, and the prizes we would take, and what adventures we would seek when the pirogue was finished. I participated in his raptures, and looked forward eagerly to that happy time. I was quite on for the undertaking.

'Abou,' I cried, 'when shall we commence working at her?'

'We must wait,' said he, 'until the things have been removed from the big vessel. That won't take long, for the best part will remain where it is now. Then, when all the Malays and Papuans have left, you can look around and take what you

want. Then when you have got your materials, you and I will begin as soon as Nizam has sailed.'

'Sailed! Where is he going to sail to?'

'He is going to take the big vessel to sell the cargo.'

'Why don't we go with him?'

'Because he does not take us. Besides, we shall have the boat to build.'

With this unsatisfactory reply Abou departed, leaving me in the garden. I wandered around, delighting in the beauties of the place, listlessly plucking the flowers that arrested my notice, until I came to a spot that was all sombre, dark, thick evergreens, extending like a wall. For some reason—I don't know why—I determined to make my way through this dark huge hedge, and brushed through with determination, until I found my way absolutely and completely arrested by a towering fence of prickly-pear. I looked in vain for an outlet, but saw none; so I walked alongside the wall of prickles for some two hundred yards, when I came to a narrow opening in the fence of cacti. I marched in, and found a tortuous passage, very narrow, very winding, which I followed mechanically, being unable to see a yard before me, so short were the turns. At length it broadened a little, and the passage became less winding, and I could hear in the distance something like a waterfall. As I got nearer, I could distinguish the sound as the gushing of a fountain. In a moment I heard women's voices talking in Arabic, and I felt a trifle scared, because I began to comprehend where I was getting to. I knew that if Nizam should find me, my head would leave my shoulders with terrible despatch, and yet I could not resist the temptation to have a look. But I resolved to act discreetly; so I walked with the greatest caution, and on finding myself close to another narrow outlet, I lay on the ground, peeping through the screen of prickly-pear. There were three ladies dressed in the Arabic costume, reclining on the ground and smoking from a narghileh or water-pipe, to which three tubes were attached. They were talking pleasantly about the prize that had been taken, and how the cabins had been nailed up by Abou, and no one knew yet what was in them. Two of these ladies were grown mature women, fine-looking, but rather fat. They had lovely eyes and beautiful hair. But the third was one of the most beautiful women I had ever beheld. Her face was a perfect oval; her hair was a bluish black, and full of natural ripples; her eyes were large, almond-shaped, and full of languid light. My breath came thick. My head seemed bursting, my blood on fire. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping from rushing out into the pleasant garden where they were grouped around the fountain, and avowing my love on the spot. And yet at the same time I felt afraid. Something new had come to me. I was in love, and for the first time. My fate was before me, and all thoughts that I might have had of my father and my country were buried fifty fathoms deep under the flood of impetuous passion that rushed over my soul.

Soon they began to talk again. One who wore a scarlet silk caftan commenced joking Fatima about a screen. Her name then was Fatima. That was so much gained. I knew her name, and my eyes actually filled with tears of joy, because I knew how to think of her. Fatima! What a

delightful name it was! Fatima! It had a sound of inexpressible tenderness!

One of the stout things commenced joking her about a screen.

'Fatima kisses the screen. Lula, will you believe it! Fatima presses her lips in the tenderest manner to the screen.'

'How do you know, Nerinda?' said the other fat thing, looking at the darling Fatima with a horrid smile.

'When my lord had his noonday meal, I just peeped through the curtain in his room, and seeing four men there, I modestly withdrew, when who should I see but Fatima coming to the curtain and peeping through it! Then the poor thing sighed, and pressed her lips to that old screen, and peeped again, and sighed. O Lula, what made her sigh?'

'Stooping perhaps, if her caftan was too tight.'

'Perhaps it was, Lula, or perhaps it was the sight of the handsome Moussoul. He is only seventy, and his beard is not very gray; and his face is not much scarred.'

'Or perhaps,' chimed in Lula, 'it was Abdallah the martial, the heroic Abdallah she was gazing on; Abdallah, who loves the greasy black slave Maime.'

'No,' continued the first speaker; 'it was not Abdallah, and it was not Moussoul for whom she sighed. It was good old Abou, who has two old wives, and wants a young one. It must have been Abou for whom the fair Fatima, the bright flower from the stem of the brave Nizam, pours unavailing sighs and kisses the screen.'

'Of course it was Abou,' rejoined Lula; 'it must have been Abou, because it could not have been the Feringhi. It could not be the baby-faced Giaour.—Could it, Fatima, dearest?'

To my intense delight, and at the same time to my grief and pain, the lovely girl burst into a passion of tears, and covered her face with her hands. The others laughed, and smoked complacently, chatting away on a thousand frivolous subjects.

I remained rooted to the spot. Was it possible that Fatima cared for me, and had seen me? I had noticed the curtain in front of the door in Nizam's room. It led then to the women's apartments, to the zenana. The two ladies who sneered at Fatima were then probably Nizam's wives, Lula and Nerinda. Neither of them could be Fatima's mother, for the eldest looked only twenty-one; and Fatima could not be more than fourteen, though among the Arabs there are mothers at thirteen. And Fatima loved me! Would I ever have an opportunity of telling her how I loved her? When Nizam was gone to sea, perhaps there would be an occasion. How I strained my eyes to look at the object of my sudden but intense love; and how I watched the heaving of her gentle breast, as she sobbed in uncontrollable grief! Soon she ceased to weep, and rising from the marble pavement that surrounded the fountain, disappeared into the house which was close at hand.

I stole away with a mind filled with the most delicious emotion, inwardly resolving that I would make known to the girl my sentiments. The way to do this was not very clear; but I was too sanguine of disposition to doubt for a moment the possibility of the attempt. When I emerged from the walls of cactus, which rose on each side

to a height of twenty feet, I took the bearings as well as I could, and found that there must be quite a considerable garden behind the prickly-pear which was sacred to the females of Nizam's household. It seemed to me that the pirogue which I was about to build would assist me very materially in any plans I might form with respect to Fatima, and I resolved therefore to plunge headlong into building, and seek every opportunity to revisit the garden without awakening suspicion.

Filled with these thoughts, I returned to the court-yard, where I found the greatest activity prevailing. There were fires everywhere, and sheep and kids roasting whole, poultry on spits and seething in pots, slaves rushing about full of importance; in fact the whole place full of turmoil. I watched the scene with amusement. Presently Moussoul the old quartermaster came up with a bright-looking Seedi boy about fifteen, who was assigned to me by Nizam. His name was Bikur, and he salaamed profusely, saying how devoted he would be, and all that sort of thing. I told him that if he would be a good servant, I would be a good master; but if he wasn't, then I would return him to Nizam. Upon this he made more salaams and protestations, and indeed seemed very anxious to win my approval. I asked old Moussoul where my room was to be, and found myself soon in one of the towers at the corners of the walls. This really was one of the pleasantest places that could be found, as there is eternal summer there, and a cool place to sleep in is of the greatest importance. I found a large strong trunk with a good lock and key, in which were the clothes given to me by Nizam at the noon-tide meal. And there were, besides sundry conveniences, a handsome sleeping-carpet, and an excellent pair of Arab pistols. The door was fastened by a huge wooden bar. There were no windows; but by leaving the door open the same object was attained.

I dismissed Bikur, and remained in my little room monarch of all I surveyed. My first thought was to secure the door, and to take out my father's jewels from their concealment and stow them away in my box. I spread my carpet, and tried the effect. It was curious somehow, but I felt dissatisfied. While my life had been an adventurous one, I somehow liked it; but this approach to respectability, this room and box of my own, these two suits of clothes, one for holidays and feasts and one for business purposes, seemed too much like the European life that was gone, and suggested comparisons that were disagreeable. A room plastered with mud, with no windows, and no furniture save a carpet and a box, was not pleasant for one who knew what a room should contain. I must confess that my mind became filled with a train of despondent reflections, when the thought of Fatima came to nerve me to endeavour and to give me an object powerful enough to dispel thoughts of home, that actually for the first time intruded on me. I proceeded at once to don my holiday garments, stuck my sabre and pistols in my shawl, and descended into the court-yard just as the muezzin had called to prayer.

As soon as prayer was over, hundreds of torches were lighted; and the Arabs generally, and the Malays who were invited or had invited themselves, attacked the various good things that had

been prepared *al fresco*. We who were the guests of Nizam followed him to the room where we had been on former occasions, I wondering where we should dine, as the room was not large enough to contain us all. But the curtain which I looked for had been removed, and we passed into a much larger room beyond, at the end of which was a lattice-work partition of bamboo, behind which we could see the indistinct forms of women. There were some thirty guests in all, including six Malay chiefs, whose religion does not seem to interfere with their eating anything and with anybody. For some reason Nizam desired to shew them particular honour, so they messed in a circle with him. We, the four who had eaten with him in the morning, were by ourselves, and the others formed groups of four, and squatted where they chose. Then followed an endless series of pilaws, kabobs, kitcheneries, roast-meats, sweetmeats, and fruits. At the end of every course we had sherbets, and the slaves sprinkled us with rose-water. It was like being in the Arabian Nights. We had also a tiny speck of attar of rose in its pasty state stuck in the ball of our thumbs. This I believe is considered the acme of luxurious living. There were a few curries prepared, out of compliment to one or two Arabs who had lived in Hindustan, and I gladly seized the opportunity of eating food to which I had been so long a stranger. The way of eating was strictly with the right hand; and when the roast-meats were brought I wondered how we should tackle them. But About just seized the bone with his left hand, and with inimitable dexterity tore a piece off with his hand. To use the knife at a great feast is considered ill-bred, because the knife may be used for warlike purposes; so with the roast-birds, which were brought round hissing hot on the spits, each man tore off a wing or other portion with his right hand. For the curries we used our fingers.

When we had completed the repast, which must have lasted three hours, servants brought ewers and basins of water as usual, and then we had coffee and pipes. During the meal I stole as many glances as I dared towards the lattice, and my heart throbbed with deep joy when I caught the tender glance of a dark eye fixed on myself. I felt sure it was Fatima, and I vainly puzzled my brain for some way of communicating my sentiments; but I could think of none, and the guests left the room before I had decided on anything. I hurriedly went to my room, changed my gay attire, and taking with me my sleeping-carpet, resolved to pass the night in the garden under the dark evergreens.

CHAPTER VII.—LOVE.

Night-time at Gezireh was the most delicious thing imaginable. It was quite a luxury to breathe the air of that enchanting spot. Simple existence was happiness in itself. As I passed through the garden, the air was heavy with a thousand nameless perfumes, among which the Indian jessamine asserted itself as the strongest. I had thoughts of sleeping in one of the arbours twined with this plant and the wild grape, but I do verily believe the perfume would have suffocated me. I went on gathering handfuls of sweet flowers out of pure romance and ecstasy, and suddenly the thought flashed over me that I would make a bouquet and leave it beside the fountain. I did not know

enough Arabic to make it symbolical; but I remembered that the almond flower is a sign of marriage, because *fistek* (almond) rhymes with *yastek* (pillow); and two almond flowers on one stem represent, in the language of signs, two heads on one pillow; and that was about all I did know. There was no moon; but I was determined to find an almond tree if I could by the smell; and so I wandered up and down for hours, constantly coming across trees which I believed to be the right ones, but which turned out to be oleanders. At last I came across a veritable almond, and selected the most beautiful twin blossom I could find. Around this I grouped some pretty blue and white flowers, and I made a background of dark crimson leaves and another of green ferns. Then I hurried off in the direction of the evergreens, and made my way to the prickly cactus hedge, through which I steered with great caution, as there was no moon. At last I came to the opening, and cautiously stole into the open space. There was light enough from the stars to discern everything dimly, and I made for the fountain without hesitation. Placing the bouquet at the edge of the marble pavement, I wrote as well as I could, in Arabic characters, the word *FATIMA* in the sand, devoutly praying to the god of love that she might be the first to come down. Then off I trudged, as happy as if I had found a diamond, and picturing to myself how she would find it, and press her lips to it, and perhaps write love-messages in the sand, and then erase them, looking guiltily around. And in this frame of mind I emerged from the garden, determined to sleep on board the vessel after all. When I got to the jetty, I found sentinels placed on board, who saluted me respectfully, which I was very glad of, and made no objection to my entering the saloon, and spreading my sleeping-carpet on the table. I soon went to sleep, and dreamed all night of the Arab maiden.

In the morning I was aroused by Abou, who told me to hurry with my toilet, for that Al Reis was coming. If there are people in England who believe that Arabs are uncivilised, they are greatly mistaken; for they wash repeatedly, and are extremely punctilious as to their nails, beard, &c. And I verily believe that this was one of the reasons why I was so great a favourite among them. Soon Al Reis made his appearance, attended by a couple of his spearmen, and saluted us both, we kissing his hand respectfully. He directed the spearmen to wait outside the cabin, and not to permit any one to enter under any pretext. Then he told me to open the grand cabin doors, which I quickly did with the claw of a big hammer; and Nizam entered, followed by Abou and myself, all of us thrilling with curiosity. The stern cabins were much the same as others, except that there was a large cage of Java sparrows, all of which, poor little things, had been starved to death. Nizam patted Abou on the shoulder, and called him 'Old Fidelity,' since it was plain that Abou had not even glanced in for a moment before nailing up the doors, or the poor birds would not have been sacrificed so cruelly. There was a little room at one end of the sleeping-room, which I knew to be the bullion-room, and I represented to Nizam that perhaps we had better look for keys in the writing-desk. He nodded assent; and sure enough there was a large bunch on a ring, one of which was a peculiar brass key of English or American make. I said

that I thought this would prove to be the key of a safe or iron chest for holding money; and we all proceeded into the little room, where indeed was a safe, as I believed, with a great brass trade-mark on it of some New York Company. I gave the key to Al Reis, and told him not to turn it, but to slip it in, and it would open. He did so; and the door of the safe swung open immediately, to his great satisfaction. He viewed the ponderous doors with surprise, and I am convinced was more delighted with the safe repository he had obtained for his treasures than with the treasures in it.

There were heaps of papers, which he handed to me and told me to read. I glanced at them. They were in Dutch, which I did not understand, and I handed them back to him. But he told me to keep them all, and perhaps I might make out something. We found diverse boxes of small size, which were opened by various keys on the ring, and in one was a mass of gold mohurs, between four and five hundred, and several bundles of papers, which he handed over to me to make out. My heart gave a leap as I recognised English bank-notes to a large amount, and Bank of Amsterdam paper also for many thousand gulden. Nizam took the box of gold, giving us each a handful, for which we made him many salaams. We were all by this time in excellent humour, and Nizam was uncommonly gracious. I could have embraced him for Fatima's sake, and I did kiss his hand with such enthusiasm as both astonished and pleased him.

The next thing we examined was a common enough box of sandal-wood, on which were large seals. It had been covered with a wrapping of cocoa-nut fibre, which Abou had cut off with his knife. Nizam's eyes flashed fire.

'What seal is that?' demanded he.

'The Dutch East India Company,' I replied; 'and it must be either precious papers or something of great value.'

'Look about you, my children; I will return to the cabin and examine it there,' said Al Reis, who did not wish to exhibit emotion before us, as he held evidently what the Dutchman had considered the most precious part of his cargo.

Abou and I found another box of gold and more bank-notes, which were at once intrusted to me, and which I carefully stowed away with the ship's papers. This exhausted the safe. But around in the bullion-room, which was sheathed with iron, were boxes of much larger size, full of seed-pearl, and bags of rupees and dollars, all in silver. We hastened in to tell the Reis of our good fortune, and found him in a state of great perplexity. He had broken open the sandal-wood box and exposed to view a casket of polished steel, richly chased with gold. This he had endeavoured to open with every one of the keys, and had failed. He was then trying to force it open with the point of his dagger, but fruitlessly. Leaving it with a sigh, he returned to the bullion-room to count the silver. There were eighty thousand American dollars, and fifty thousand rupees, all in bags of a thousand each. We handed him the box with the gold, and he ordered us to open our two hands, which he completely filled with coin. Then he gave us of the same measure five times of silver dollars, which we wrapped up in the linen kopra worn by Arabs, and which serves as a sheet at night-time. The seed-pearl

he said he would sell at Muscat, or perhaps at Bushire in Persia, or at some port in the Gulf of Oman. He offered us some; but what could we do with seed-pearl; so he promised that he would remember us in the sale. Clapping his hands for a slave, he said he would order mid-day meal for us all, on board; but no slave appeared, which made him angry. So, going into the saloon, he shouted: 'Balu, Honua, Byagi;' and shortly Malays and Papuans came running; but the sentries would not admit them; at which piece of obedience Nizam remembered his order, and was well pleased, giving to each spearman a piece of gold. He ordered one of the black fellows to send for his Arab cook, and order him to prepare food on board the ship. Then we returned to the cabin, and Nizam asked particularly if I could make anything out of the papers. I said that I could make out the name of the ship, because it was printed in Roman characters, not in the Dutch character, and was a Greek name, *Antigone*, but that was about all. At this he seemed disappointed. He thought for a moment, then said: 'My son, and you, Abou, whom I love above all my Arabs, there is surely here some great thing. I am not one of those foolish ones who believe in charms and spells and in magic caskets. Nevertheless, here is a casket which I do not see how to open, nor indeed can I see a keyhole. The secret to open this must be in the papers. Look for yourselves.'

We examined the casket, Abou first, and I afterwards. Abou shook his head. When I saw it I gave a cry, for I recognised one of these curious locks which open by a secret word. Arranged in a circle were all the letters of the alphabet, and out of them by transposition was to be formed a word which would open the casket. I explained this to Al Reis, who comprehended it at once, and promised me a large reward if I could find out the word. 'But,' said I, 'Al Reis, there are twenty-four letters. Only think how many combinations might be made. Just think of it. I have heard of these things before, and the name is never written. The man who has it has to remember it.'

Then he promised me anything that I might ask if I would persevere and go through all the papers.

'But, Highness,' I broke in again, 'how am I to know when I am right unless I have the casket? I must try every word with the letters themselves.'

'No, no; I will try myself.'

'But you can't understand Roman letters.'

'I will learn. My daugh— I have some one who can teach me.'

I did my best not to look thunderstruck, but I fear I made a very poor attempt. So I promised that I would make out a list of words for him; but I tried to convince him that the hope was futile, as the twenty-four letters contained every possible word in every possible European language. Nevertheless, I would examine the papers carefully.

The meal was brought in, and we had a merry one. Nizam told us his projects for the sale of the cargo; how he would be obliged to go to Arabia, not so much to dispose of the cargo, but to get Arab recruits in sufficient numbers to have a full crew for the vessel, which he dubbed *The Shark*. Abou and I were to remain behind, and build a pirogue according to my ideas; and I was to examine the papers thoroughly, to gain the clue to the word. He intended, if possible, to get a

hundred Arabs, which would give us a complete control of the pirates. His present power was founded on his knowledge and his bravery, the Malays being alone six times as many as we were. With a hundred more he would feel in security when he was away. Abdallah, whom he relied on greatly, and Moussoul would command his proa, which would be manned with a few Malays and Papuans; whilst to Abou and to me he would commit the safety of his castle and his possessions. He relied on us to keep the pirates on friendly terms, and to conceal all knowledge of the silver on board. The gold he intended to exhibit, and the seed-pearl. The silver we must put in the safe and fasten. Then we would lock up the bullion-room, and say nothing about its existence, and by putting a curtain in front of it, the Malays would take it for the zenana, and would ask no questions.

This we did accordingly; and Nizam sailed in *The Shark*, taking with him the greater portion of the Arabs. Then Abou and I set resolutely to work at the pirogue, being daily surrounded by curious Malays, to whom we explained our intentions. Some thought the proas they made better; others were taken with the novelty of the pirogue; and when I assured them that she would beat a big vessel sailing with a moderate wind, they would have gone to work immediately, and made imitations of the one we were engaged on, if the head-chief, Tamula, had permitted. But he being a prudent man, told them to wait and see how one would turn out before they adopted an untried idea.

Meanwhile I went every morning before daybreak with a bouquet, which I laid near the fountain. Some one took them away regularly, which gave me strong hopes that Fatima was aware that I loved her. I had purposed originally to have waited until Tamula set off on an expedition with the proas, which would rid me of the supervision of Moussoul and Abdallah. Good old Abou never said to me, 'Where goest thou?' or 'Whence comest thou?' but those two I fancied looked after me a trifle more than was friendly. I believe now that this was imagination, but at the time it irritated me. One morning, however, I determined, whatever happened, to wait and see who took my bouquets. I made one as beautiful as I could, deposited it in the usual place, and retired with beating heart to the edge of the prickly pear-hedge. The sky was soon all rosy with red clouds, and a warmer flush stole through the air, and a twitter of birds awoke in all the branches. Soon up came the cheery sun from the depths of the sea, and a flutter of life arose down in the Malay town. My heart came to my mouth as a vision of light garments came tripping from the door of the house, and the beautiful Fatima came direct to the bouquet, and seizing it with a glad cry, pressed it to her bosom and to her lips. Her hair was all loose, flowing down her perfect form; her eyes were bright with youth and happy love, and there was a look of eager fond expectation thrown around the garden, as if in search of some one, which thrilled me to the core. I could endure silence no more, but left my covert, crying softly: 'Fatima! Fatima!' She turned at the cry, and gave one long look, and then ran to meet me all love and joy. We embraced with the utmost

passion; and whilst the words 'I love you!' trembled on my lips, she anticipated me, crying: 'Ah love! I love you!'

With the instinctive caution of an eastern girl, she retreated with me to the covert of the hedge, and there behind the cactus gave full course to her affection. I replied as ardently, and we confided to each other how we loved from the first glance. An hour of this heavenly intercourse passed like a moment, and we parted with mutual pledges to meet again that evening. When I went down to the jetty near which our pirogue was building, I found Abou and our workmen in full swing. I determined to spare no pains to hurry on the completion of this vessel, as I foresaw that I might want to elope with the daughter of my chief, and the pirogue would exactly suit. She was to be made principally of stout bamboos, the calking to be of india-rubber below the water-line, and above of cocoa fibre. Her lines were to be like an English schooner, and she was to have two broad lug-sails, with foresail and jib. The deck was to be flush, with grooves for the fitting of powerful sweeps, to be pulled in a calm; and below was to be a large saloon with a good stern cabin. Such was the programme. The timber we wanted had been partly taken from the Dutch vessel, with spars, sails, and cordage; and as we could not have a wheel, we were to have a tiller.

Having now a new impulse for working, I went at it like a giant, and assisted with an enthusiasm which delighted Abou, who—may I be forgiven—thought that it was from friendship to himself. Old Moussoul came down and nodded approbation; and now that we were working on the flush-deck things began to look a little more ship-shape. I told him that we wanted sadly a wheel and a capstan, and entreated him if he came across any European vessels on the next cruise to bring them along. I shewed him how we would arrange the planking so as to fit in the capstan when it came, and cautioned him not to take a big one, but only from some vessel about four hundred tons. Though this would still be above our size by far, yet there are few vessels of smaller size in the eastern seas, and this he knew. He told me that he would not forget, and that arrangements were then pending for a cruise in a few days, which I was exceedingly glad to hear.

In the evening, after dinner, Abou wanted me to sit and sip coffee whilst Abdallah told Arab stories, in which he was very accomplished, and could recite the Seven Poems of the Moallakat and the feats of Antar so long as breath remained. I was usually very glad to hear him, but this time I excused myself on the ground of a headache, and retired; Abou thinking that it was from working too hard, and cautioning me from abusing my strength and endurance. Immediately I made for the place of rendezvous, and there found my darling, who flew to my arms with such fervour that I involuntarily shed tears of happiness. On perceiving this tribute to her charms, she gave me a heavenly smile, which even the starlight could not hide, and we were at once overhead in mutual confidences. I told her all about myself and my life with the Arabs; and she told me that her mother was a European whom Nizam had captured, and whom he had made his wife and the chief of his zenana. She pined away, however, and died when Fatima was only three years old. Nor did the

dear child know what country she belonged to, but she remembered two words which her mother used to say: 'Anima mia.'

'Anima mia!' cried I; 'why, that may be Spanish or Italian.'

'What does it mean, love?'

'It means "my soul."'

Here Fatima laughed a delicious ripple of music, and said: 'You then are my anima mia.'

'And you mine.'

'Ah, dearest Feringhi, I cannot speak your name as you can mine. Teach me to say it.'

Then we tried. She could not say Charles; she would say Tsarlis and Sarl; but she could not arrive at the name; so I taught her to say Carlos, which I told her was the way her mother would pronounce it, and that it was the same thing.

Thus fled the happy hours of newly-dawned love, during which I told her about the pirogue I was building; and how, if her father would not consent, we would take it and run away. The answer to this was a pressure of the lips, and the words—whispered in the sweetest voice that ever woman had: 'Carlos, anima mia, where you go, I will go; what you do, I will do; what you worship, I will worship; and when you die, I will die. Take me, Carlos, for I am yours.'

(To be continued and concluded next month.)

COINCIDENCES IN DATES.

In an article lately given by us on 'Unlucky Days,' we illustrated the proneness exhibited so widely in society to attach importance to numbers, days, dates, as having some mysterious connection with the unfavourable incidents of human life; as if an overruling decree of fate or destiny had settled the whole affair for us, without leaving us the power of preventing or setting it aside. It will be found, on further examination, that this is especially marked in connection with sovereigns, princes, and great personages generally, more particularly in the years of their birth, accession, deposition, and death.

One singular mode of fishing out the connection (for a fishing it certainly is in many cases) consists in adding up the digits or numerals in a particular date, and comparing this sum with the date itself. Thus, the present year, 1876, is expressed by four digits (one, eight, seven, six) the sum of which amounts to twenty-two; and the 'fishing' would consist in catching any peculiar relation or connection between twenty-two and 1876. The French have taxed their ingenuity greatly in this kind of thing, with results which are at least curious if nothing more. Many examples of this will be found in an article on 'Coincidences,' in No. 366 of the *Journal*, which we need not repeat; a few in addition will suffice.

Take, for instance, some of the French sovereigns who flourished several centuries ago. The crotcheter-mongers have discovered, in four cases at any rate, a numerical connection between the order of succession on the one hand, and on the other the sum of the digits in special dates rendered memorable by noteworthy events in the lives of the respective sovereigns. Louis IX. was born in 1215; the sum of these digits is nine. Charles VII. was born in 1402; the sum of these digits is seven. Louis XII. was born in 1461; the sum of these digits is twelve. Lastly, Louis XIV. was crowned in 1643,

a date the digits of which sum up to fourteen. In regard to an intermediate sovereign, Louis XIII., the accumulation of coincidences (so to speak) is really very curious. We must first remind the reader that in the old court language of France 'Louis' was spelled 'Loys,' that this king's French Christian and surnames were 'Loys de Bourbon,' and that those of his queen were 'Anne d'Autriche.' The figures came out thus: Louis XIII. married Anne of Austria in 1615; the sum of these four digits is thirteen; 'Loys de Bourbon' comprises thirteen letters, and so does 'Anne d'Autriche;' the boy-king and girl-princess were each thirteen years old at the time of the marriage; he was the thirteenth Louis of France, and she the thirteenth Anne of Austria.

Come we now to the nineteenth century, with which mystical Frenchmen have been equally busy. Bourbonists, Bonapartists, Orleanists, Republicans—all are cited to supply materials for the same story. The great French Revolution, which brought so many momentous events in its train, began in 1789; the sum of these four digits is twenty-five, which, added to 1789, brings us to 1814, the year when the Emperor Napoleon went captive to Elba, and ceased his European conquests—although there was destined to be one more year of struggle in the battle-field. When Charles X. was deposed in 1830, a contest arose concerning his successor; some politicians wished for the appointment of another Bourbon, while others preferred Louis-Philippe, Duke of Orleans, as a representative monarch or 'citizen king.' The Chamber of Deputies decided on the latter, by two hundred and twenty-one votes against one hundred and eighty-one. The Bourbonists sustained a defeat; but they solaced themselves by pointing out that by expressing the numbers in words instead of figures, and taking the alphabetical order of the letters in the words, they could prove two hundred and twenty-one to mean 'La queue de Robespierre,' while one hundred and eighty-one meant 'Les Honnêtes Gens.' We have not quite succeeded in realising this bit of reckoning ourselves; but the Bourbonists very much relished the idea of proving their adherents to be 'virtuous or honourable persons,' while their opponents were merely 'the tail of Robespierre.'

We have had a little of this sort of thing in England, and possibly a due exercise of ingenuity might convert the little into much. Charles I.'s son, and eventual successor, was born in 1630; the sum of these digits is ten, which brings us to 1640, the year when the short parliament began to make short work of the kingly power. Again the sum of the digits in 1640 is eleven, which brings us to 1651, the year when the battle of Worcester drove Charles II. into exile. One more instance: George I. occupied the British throne in 1714, which added to thirteen, the sum of its digits, makes 1727, the date of his death.

But apart from, and in addition to, these numerical conundrums involving the summing up of digits, there are many associations of particular years with certain persons, families, and dynasties. The year 1809 was marked by the death of Haydn and the birth of Mendelssohn; the sum of these digits (availing ourselves of one more illustration of this class) is eighteen, which, added to 1809, brings us to 1827, the year marked by the death of another great composer, Beethoven.

The year '88 is associated with a train of events, none of them cheerful in character, concerning the House of Stuart. For instance, in 1388, Robert II. first Stuart king of Scots became little more than a nominal sovereign in the hands of the nobles, and died two years afterwards; in 1488, James III. of Scotland was murdered; close to the ominous '88, but really in 1587, the beautiful, erring, hapless Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded; in 1688, the last Stuart king of Great Britain, James II. (James VII. of Scotland) was dethroned; and in 1788, Charles Edward Stuart, who had been known forty years previously as the Young Pretender (the 'Bonnie Prince Charlie' of the romancers and balladists), died in a foreign land, unhonoured and almost uncared for. In twelve years another '88 will come; is there another Stuart anywhere, to come under a cloud in that year?

In some instances one particular month in the year, and one particular day of that month, are claimed by the believers in the star of destiny as being associated with one particular personage of note. Destiny or no destiny, it is a fact that the 24th of February was thus associated with the Emperor Charles V., the 2d of December with the late Emperor Napoleon III., the 14th of May with Henri Quatre, and the 13th of October with King Otho of Greece. In the dreadful religious wars of the sixteenth century in France, Huguenots massacred Catholics in Bearn on the 25th of August in one year; and Catholics massacred Huguenots on the 25th of August three years afterwards. The stern Puritan and the gay monarch who had so much to do with the moulding of English history during the seventeenth century, had each his particular association with one special day in the year—Oliver Cromwell with the 3d of September, and Charles II. with the 29th of May.

A crotchet has been started (we do not know by whom) to the effect that the number three is peculiarly stamped on the royal dynasties of England; that after three sovereigns of any one dynasty, either a revolution takes place, or a passing of the royal sceptre to a collateral line. It is certainly the case that the House of Blois came in under Stephen, in virtue of his father's marriage with a daughter of William the Conqueror; that Edward II. was dethroned; that Lady Jane Grey, through her relations and adherents, made an attempt to gain the throne; that Cromwell made a gap in the Stuart line; that James II. was driven out; and that the House of Hanover came in on the lapse of issue to the House of Orange and to the Protestant branches of the Stuarts—these are admitted facts; but nevertheless we must confess to have failed in an attempt to reconcile other known events in English history with this number three theory.

Without reference to any particular months, we find a particular day of the month pitched upon as intimately affecting certain kings and great people. We have already had occasion to mention the way in which number fourteen affects the career of Henry IV. of France; and we may add that, determined that he shall not escape without paying as much homage as possible to number fourteen, the French computers have made out two whimsical calculations—that the year of his birth completed fourteen centuries, plus fourteen

decades, plus fourteen years; and that he lived four times fourteen years, plus fourteen weeks, plus four times fourteen days.

Days of the week have not been lost sight of by those who take an interest in ferreting out the supposed fatality of dates—such as Tuesday to Thomas à Becket, Thursday to the Tudors, and Saturday to the Guelphs.

Two remarks suggest themselves: the first is, that we do not hold ourselves responsible for the accuracy of the several dates set down in this article; some seem to us not quite free from doubt; and in regard to all of them, the writer virtually says to the reader: 'As it was told to me, so do I tell it to thee.' The other remark is, that even if all the coincidences are verifiable, they do not necessarily presuppose any mystical influence of destiny or fatalism. They are quite explainable on the Theory of Probabilities, the Doctrine of Chances. The odds may be millions to one against a particular coincidence; yet that one coincidence *may* present itself in the natural order of things; and when it does, it excites more than usual attention.

LEFT IN CHARGE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

A MOST pleasant day followed. I found Mr Gordon a more than ordinarily entertaining companion. He had evidently travelled a great deal, and possessed a fund of general information, which he quite understood how to make the most of. I pressed him to extend his visit for a few days, at all events until my wife returned, and he seemed nothing loath; the business in London might after all be postponed; and in such pleasant quarters, he said, he would be very glad to remain. So two days sped agreeably away; and on the morning of the third, I happened to be sitting in the library, when, to my astonishment, I heard a smothered sound of voices in the drawing-room, as if in whispered conversation. I was just going to get up to see from whom the sounds proceeded, when Mr Gordon appeared in the doorway. It might have been fancy—it was treated then by me as such—but I did imagine he started and looked somewhat disconcerted for the space of a very brief moment; the next he was himself again.

'I have been looking over your daughter's music-books,' he said. 'Is she a very accomplished musician?'

'She sings a good deal,' I replied, 'and is very fond of it; but I can't say she is *very* accomplished. She takes after Arthur in her love of music.'

'Ah! indeed,' responded Mr Gordon.

'Does he still carry about his flute?' I asked.

'No; I don't think so,' he answered rather dubiously.

'By the bye,' I said presently, 'did you notice the new photograph we have of him in the drawing-room? He sent it to us about six months ago.'

'No; I didn't observe it,' he replied.

'We can have a look at it now then,' I said, rising as I spoke, and leading the way towards the adjoining room, followed closely by my visitor.

The photograph, which was hanging on the wall with several others, was a large and most life-like representation of Arthur; it was absolutely impossible for any one who had once seen him to

mistake it; nevertheless, to my unutterable but silent surprise, Mr Gordon directed his gaze towards *another* photograph. Whether his quick instinct or my involuntary correction of the mistake by an indicating motion of my hand towards the real picture helped him towards a rapid rectification of his error, I could not tell. The little incident passed by; the photograph was duly admired and pronounced a most capital likeness; and we passed on to other topics. But an impression was made upon my mind—an impression I could neither resist nor account for, nor dismiss, in fact could hardly have shaped into words; but nevertheless it was there—an intangible something—a doubt, nay almost a dread, of my visitor; for I have owned I am a nervous man, and for one of that temperament to begin to conjure up fancies is certainly anything but conducive to *gaieté de cœur*. I was, in truth, reduced to a condition of nervousness which it required all my efforts to conceal.

I would not press Mr Gordon to stay; I did not feel so cordial to him—that was the truth; and I was growing more and more uncomfortable at what my wife would think of my having done so at all. How glad I would be to see them all back again. The time had never dragged so wearily as on the third day of Mr Gordon's visit. I don't think I have mentioned that it was in the month of October that all these things happened; the days were getting shorter and shorter, and on this particular one darkness had come on more than usually fast; it was raining too; so we—my guest and I—sat in the library carrying on a rather rapid conversation. At last the servant appeared, bringing in the moderator lamp, which, with its shade on, she placed about the centre of the table by which Mr Gordon was sitting. His hand was lying listlessly upon it, and for the first time I observed the peculiar size of it, and the long lithe fingers—very bony and thin, except at the tips and joints, which were of extraordinary proportions. A powerful hand—a clasping, clutching-looking hand—not a pleasant one to encounter in anger. I could fancy—here I again indulged in a terrifying reverie; but I checked myself; I called myself a fool. I, a man come to my time of life, giving way to such absurdities; it was degrading! I banished them as well as I could; but the light from the lamp still fell so directly upon that hand, that I was glad when the announcement of dinner caused a thorough interruption to my musings. We did not sit up so late that evening—neither seemed disposed to do so; and at about half-past ten I found myself safely shut up in my bedroom, preparing for rest. What prompted me, I do not know—it certainly was not according to my usual custom—but it occurred to me to take out and examine my revolver.

There it was lying snugly in its case; but—did my eyes deceive me, or was I dreaming!—*the cartridges were gone!*—the pistol was empty. I stood transfixed for a few seconds; a cold thrill ran down my backbone. I could not doubt who had done it; and as is the case with a drowning man, before whose eyes, they say, in the short space of time during which semi-consciousness remains, a lifetime of events flashes by, so did a thousand suspicious circumstances connected with my brother's friend flit through my brain. I had been deceived; he was without doubt what, almost unconfessed to myself, I had been thinking he was all that day—

an impostor and scoundrel, who meant not only to rob my house, but to murder me, if I attempted the faintest resistance.

That he was one of the gang going about, I also suspected; and if that supposition was correct, doubtless he had more accomplices, who would come to assist him in his depredations. It was not a pleasant position for a man to be in, however brave he might be, and for me it was simply terrific.

It would be madness to go to his room and confront him; such a course would only precipitate matters; I must act promptly; whatever I resolved to do must be done, and done quickly.

It was a stormy and tempestuous night; the rain was beating upon the windows in perfect torrents, and the wind was high. That was in my favour; for I resolved, after a short period of deliberation, to lose not a moment in leaving the house, and slipping round to the stables, to saddle my horse, and gallop as hard as I could to Lowton for assistance. I had not undressed, so no time was lost in making my exit from my bedroom, the door of which I locked, and also closed and locked the dressing-room door which led into the bedroom, leaving the door to it, which opened on to the landing, unlocked, so that if my suspicions were correct—and I doubted less and less that they were so—the seizure of the plate would suffice to keep intruders occupied, and prevent them from so soon discovering my absence.

At last I opened the window, which was not very far from the ground, and dropping gently down, cautiously crept round to the back-yard. I feared Rover might betray me; but as I got close to his kennel I was astonished to hear no movement.

'Rover!' I said softly, 'good dog! Rover, old fellow!' But no answering sound greeted me; all was silent, except the steady splashing of the rain and the howling wind.

'Rover!' I repeated, 'Rover!' bending down and thrusting my hand into the kennel, in my anxiety for my favourite almost forgetting my possible danger.

I felt the familiar head and rough coat; but it was a lifeless body that lay so motionless under my anxious touch. Rover was dead! A cold dew broke out all over me. I was speechless with rage, grief, and indignation. But there was no time to indulge in such feelings; assurance had now been made doubly sure; the same hand that had drawn my cartridges had poisoned my dog, and would as ruthlessly take my life away, if deemed expedient.

To gain the stables and to slip the saddle on my horse was the work of a few moments only; and favoured by the noise of the raging elements, I led him out with the certainty that no one in the house could hear what was going on.

Quietly we passed through the gate; and I glanced up towards the direction of my guest's chamber, from which I could see a bright light proceeding. That was satisfactory; he had not begun operations yet. Then I mounted, and choosing a back way, by which some distance was saved, and by which I fancied I ran less risk of meeting any possible confederates, I set off at a hard gallop for Lowton. It was a four-mile ride to the police station, but I got over it in something less than fifteen minutes. It did not take long to

explain my errand, which I did by simply stating that I had suspicions something was meditated, from the combined facts of Rover's death and the drawn cartridges. I mentioned Mr Gordon's being with me, but was careful not to commit myself to any actual implication of him.

It did not require any persuasion to get a couple of stalwart constables to accompany me back—they were so anxious to succeed in capturing the thieves that not a chance was thrown away. It was early still, comparatively—we might get back considerably before twelve; and the inspector, who evidently thoroughly grasped the position, proposed that we should regain the house by my window, and await the course of events from my bedroom. Accordingly, leaving my horse at Lowton, the two policemen, myself, and a third constable driving, started off after a short delay, in a small car which we left by itself, tying the pony to a gateway, about a quarter of a mile before reaching my place. Having first taken a ladder from the stable, we groped our way to the front of the house, and as we got there, I touched one of my companions lightly on the arm, and in a whisper directed his attention to the dining-room window. Through the chinks of the shutters we could plainly see a light was burning. Losing not another instant, I clambered up to my half-open window, followed quickly by the policemen, and there we stood, hardly breathing, to listen. Everything was just as I had left it. They had not missed me yet; probably the dressing-room had not been visited, but that would follow immediately, for hardly had we been five minutes in the house before a noise, slight in itself, but still sharp and unmistakable, warned us that some one was ascending the staircase—stealthy footsteps, voices muffled, but distinctly voices—and presently the dining-room door was softly opened, and we could distinguish a word here and there of a whispered consultation. Then came a slight metallic sound, and a crack as if something had given way, a jingle of silver—probably my grandmother's tea-pot, our most precious heirloom—and then the hurried crinkling of paper.

Still the inspector moved not. I myself was becoming quite rigid with nervous excitement. I had fancied the police would have rushed in upon them at once; but no; there he stood grasping his baton, immovable, as I could see by the expiring light of the fire, which I had fortunately chanced to replenish just before my discovery of the drawn cartridges.

What was he waiting for? It was soon explained to me: they had not all come up-stairs. More footsteps, more voices, and then a hand was laid upon the handle of my bedroom door, with no great regard to the continuance of my supposed slumbers.

Locked! and an oath, not necessary to record, here followed. Then came the sound as of something vainly inserted in the keyhole, and then—that failing—there was a united crash against what really was a fragile doorway, and the next instant what seemed to me a crowd of ruffians came trooping in. There really were three men—quite enough to have robbed and murdered me many times over, but not too many to be trapped and caught in the neatest and simplest manner by the triumphant constables, who, without a second's hesitation,

surrounded the astounded burglars before they had time to realise the situation; foremost amongst them I recognised my brother's friend, Thomas Gordon, my agreeable visitor!

Resistance was useless: they had left their arms behind them; more than one murderous-looking little weapon being afterwards found in the dining-room which they had so recently quitted. Besides which, my poor little strategy—devised out of very fear—had so far succeeded. I had purposely every night left out a couple of bottles of heavily drugged wine, which the unwelcome visitors had unsuspectingly disposed of, and which in a short time began to tell visibly upon their faculties; so they were easily secured, to the delight of the neighbourhood, and to the infinite credit and renown of myself, for I was supposed to have signalled myself most brilliantly, and was immensely congratulated upon my midnight ride to Lowton, which bade fair to become as famous as Dick Turpin's memorable exploit.

No one was more surprised at those praises than I was myself; for the fact remained, and does remain to this day, that I am a very nervous man, and what I did was done out of sheer desperation and terror; and if I had guessed what lay before me when my family went to London, I should have bidden them a final farewell, for I never could have fancied surviving such a night.

Sir Gifford Ransford's butler identified the *ci-devant* Tom Gordon, alias Joe Billings, as his assailant; and the other two, also well-known characters, were also convicted. They were sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, and I devoutly hope without the chance of a ticket-of-leave, for without doubt they would remember and repay with interest my share in their capture.

One member of my establishment was missing on the following morning after the seizure, and that was Mary the parlour-maid, our new servant, through whose agency, doubtless, Mr Gordon had carried his personation of my brother's friend into execution.

A ROMANTIC INCIDENT.

IN a work of topographical interest, abounding in beautifully printed wood-engravings, styled *Rambles in Galloway*, by Malcolm McLachlan Harper, lately published, occurs a short account of the picturesque Orchardton Round Tower—the only tower of this kind in the south-west of Scotland. It stands in a woody piece of country near Castle-Douglas. The writer says that the tower, which is evidently the relic of a feudal keep, is 'chiefly interesting as being associated with a very romantic incident in the life of a former proprietor of the estate of Orchardton, whose history formed the groundwork of Sir Walter Scott's novel of *Guy Mannering*. The account here given of it is from *Family Recollections*, by Miss Goldie, and is perfectly reliable.

'It is there related'—that is to say in the work of Miss Goldie—'that "soon after the battle of Culloden a number of prisoners were one day brought in by a party of military before Mr Goldie, then Commissary of Dumfries, who had, alas! no alternative but to order military execution to be done upon them, after it was proved

that they had formed part of the rebel army. They had contrived to hide themselves, and get to the Galloway coast, nearest to the Isle of Man, where they were skulking in hopes of some smuggler, or foreign vessel, enabling them to escape. As they were just about to be led out to execution, Mr Goldie observed one young man, of superior and interesting appearance, attempting to tear a written paper, when he immediately called out to an officer who guarded him: "Seize that paper;" which was immediately done. Upon reading it, Mr Goldie said: "Why, young man, you were attempting to destroy yourself. This paper is your commission from the king of France as an officer in his army; and I now detain you as a prisoner of war, instead of sending you off to be shot as a rebel."

"The young man was accordingly put in a place of confinement, and not a very severe one, considering what prisons then were, as he afterwards related that his chief occupation consisted in counting the large square stones with which his apartment was flagged, in every possible direction, and thus trying what their number could be raised to. But he did not continue long thus employed. A rumour speedily arose in the town that this was the long-lost heir of the House of Orchardton, an old Roman Catholic family. An old female domestic, hearing the surmises, made her way to his place of confinement, when a little conversation left no doubt that he was indeed the only son of the late Sir Robert Maxwell, who had sent him at an early age to the college of Douay, the usual place of education at that time for young men of family or fortune of the Catholic religion. Sir Robert himself being superannuated, his brother, who then took the management of him and his son and estate, wrote desiring that he should be educated for the priesthood. The young man, not relishing this destiny, made his escape from college, and enlisted in the army of Louis XV., and was one of that part of it which was sent to Scotland to assist in the enterprise of Prince Charles Edward. Young Maxwell had thus actually been taken wandering as an outcast, and in danger of forfeiting his life, on the confines of his own estate, unconscious of his rights, while his uncle was equally unconscious of the danger to his unjust possession, which lurked so near him. The whole of the facts were, however, so recent, and could be so easily proved, that Mr Goldie immediately proceeded to take all necessary steps for the security of the young Sir Robert, and also to put him in possession of his estate, when the death of the uncle removing the formidable obstacle, the usual legal formalities, after proving the identity of the heir, put him in possession of his father's fortune and title. Sir Robert soon married Miss McClellan, a niece or near relation of the last Lord Kirkcudbright, and took up his residence at Orchardton, where he continued, while he lived, the ornament and delight of the country, uniting all the gentlemanly dignity of the old school with the bland and graceful gaiety of foreign manners. The intimacy which arose between Sir Robert and Mr Goldie and his family through this romantic beginning, was long continued on very affectionate terms." Sir Robert being a partner in the Ayr or Douglas and Heron Bank, lost a large portion of his estate when that bank stopped payment. He died suddenly in

September 1786, whilst on the road to visit the Earl of Selkirk.'

Readers who are interested in the above remarkable legend, may perhaps find some additional particulars in Miss Goldie's *Family Recollections*. The chief incident referred to would at any rate form a better theme on which to found a romantic fiction than the miserable inventions drawn from the unwholesome imagination of many modern novelists.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY, during his recent visit to America, delivered an address at the new university in Baltimore which has been founded by the munificence of a private citizen, who bequeathed seven million dollars—one half for education, the other for an hospital. If Baltimore does not find itself possessed of one of the very best educating institutions in the world, it will not be through want of knowledge, for Professor Huxley shewed clearly what elementary education ought to be, and the way in which it should be directed and intensified by the higher education of the university. Art, science, history, and philosophy are included in the scheme, whereby opportunity is offered for practical investigation, for abstract thought, for development of the 'rare faculty of æsthetic representation, and the still rarer powers of creative genius.' Professor Huxley takes a high view of the medical profession, and his exposition of the training which a student for that profession should undergo, and of his subjects of study, would, if put into practice, increase the usefulness, and raise the character of the profession to high distinction. Apart from its practical value, the discourse is well worth reading, as an earnest and eloquent review of an old and much debated question, and we commend it to all who are interested in the important work of education. The promoters of the new Cavendish College at Cambridge, and the new military college near Oxford, should take it into consideration while planning their respective courses of study.

The Royal Society have published in a number of their *Proceedings* an account of the cruise of the *Valorous* in so far as relates to the physics and natural history of that portion of the North Atlantic traversed by the vessel. As some of our readers will remember, the *Valorous* accompanied the exploring ships *Alert* and *Discovery* as a store-ship; and it was on her return voyage from Disco that the observations now published were made. The 'biological results' are described by Mr Gwyn Jeffreys; and Dr Carpenter, whose son made the 'physical investigations'—chiefly on currents and temperature—contributes a Report which adds somewhat to the theory of oceanic circulation.

This expedition has been, so to speak, supplemented by foreign enterprise, for the Storting—the parliament of Norway—voted a sum sufficient to defray the cost of a series of surveys, and in the

summer of the present year the ship *Voringen* was sent out to explore from the Faroe Islands to Greenland, and from the Norwegian coast to Jan Mayen and Spitzbergen. This scheme, as will be understood, includes large parts of the North Atlantic not touched by the *Valorous*, and thus our knowledge of the animal life, of the contour of the bottom, of temperature and currents from the surface downwards, and of the chemical constitution of the water, has been much extended. And incidentally it was discovered that the banks off the coast of Norway were of a breadth quite unexpected, reaching to a hundred miles from the land. Beyond this limit the water is icy cold; but on the bank it is comparatively warm, which perhaps accounts for the mild climate of those latitudes in winter. The deepest sounding obtained during the cruise was eighteen hundred fathoms, midway between Norway and Iceland. Reports of the scientific results will be published, and in this way the Norwegian government acknowledges a debt of gratitude for the advantages which their mercantile marine has derived from the nautical surveys of other countries.

Mr Roberts, F.R.S., chemist of the Mint, has given a lecture on the apparatus with which the late Professor Graham made his researches, and therein we find a fresh example that genius of the right sort can work with the very simplest means. Wollaston and Faraday are cases in point; and now Mr Roberts tells us that 'with a glass tube and plug of plaster of Paris, Mr Graham discovered and verified the law of diffusion of gases. With a tobacco-pipe he proved indisputably that air is a mechanical mixture of its constituent gases. With a tambourine and a basin of water he divided bodies into crystalloids and colloids; and obtained rock crystal and red oxide of iron soluble in water. With a child's india-rubber balloon filled with carbonic acid he separated oxygen from atmospheric air, and established points the importance of which, from a physiological point of view, it is impossible to overrate. And finally, by the expansion of a palladium wire, he did much to prove that hydrogen is a white metal.'

A man of this stamp should be held in lasting remembrance. We are glad to see that Professor Graham's scientific papers have been collected and published for private distribution under the editorship of Dr Angus Smith.

Mr Lehmann has made experiments with a view to determine the form of nitrogen most suitable for the nutrition of plants; whether as nitric acid or as ammonia. Curious results were shewn. Some of the nitric acid plants which turned pale and sickly after a few days, were recovered by placing them in the ammonia solution. In experiments with tobacco-plants, it was found that the nitric acid plants produced three times as much dried substance as plants grown without nitrogen, and the ammonia plants six times as much: an important fact as regards tobacco. But the yellow lupine appears to be the most remarkable, for

though in itself rich in nitrogen, it will grow in soil containing scarcely any nitrogen; and we are told that it is found in abundance in districts generally barren.

We mentioned some time ago that experiments had been made by authority of the Royal Agricultural Society to determine the value of 'unexhausted improvements' on farms, to test the merits of artificial manures, of plants and seeds, and methods of cultivation. These experiments are to be continued in a systematic manner, for the Duke of Bedford has allotted a farm at Woburn to the Council of the Society, and has offered to defray the cost of such buildings as may be required, and of the experiments also. Under these favourable circumstances we may hope that many unsettled questions in agriculture will be carried to a satisfactory solution.

'On the Moon's Influence in Connection with Extremes of Temperature' is the title of a paper read to the Meteorological Society. The author, Mr Brumham, believes he has made out the fact that there is 'some important connection between lunar influences and extremes of atmospheric temperature upon the earth; but that this influence is partial, and very materially affected and modified by the circumstances and conditions of place, and that the careful and patient inquiry of *how* and *why* the weather of different localities is differently influenced by the movements of the moon, is one of the offices which meteorological science has at this time to perform.'

Mr Brumham points out that very severe winters have occurred at intervals of about sixty-two years, which correspond to periods of double the moon's cyclical return to relations with the earth and sun. Starting with 1709, he shews that the intervening dates support his theory; 'and as there was a very severe winter in 1814,' so, he concludes, 'there will be one in 1876.'

Rainfall is such an important element in regard to agriculture, sanitary measures, and engineering works, that it is encouraging to learn, from Mr G. J. Symons, the best authority on the subject, that in consequence of the number of rain-gauges now established (about two thousand) throughout the kingdom, we have a system of observation such as no other country can shew. It is hardly possible, he says, to find a district within the British Isles which is more than five miles from a rain-gauge. Considering the importance of the subject, it is suggested that an inspector should be appointed to visit all the stations, see that they are kept in order, and draw up proper reports; and that as the nation at large are interested in it, some moderate grant from the national funds should be made for carrying on the observations and publishing their results.

A very important question among all navigators is the speed at which a ship steams or sails. The log at present in use has a rotating helix, which spins round when the instrument is towed in the water; the rotations record themselves on an

indicator, and thereby shew the speed at which the vessel is moving. But this log, though ingeniously contrived, is not sufficiently accurate, and many attempts to improve it have been made, and at length what seems like the right way has come to light. This new log is fitted with electrical apparatus, besides the rotating helix, and is towed by an electric rope. The indications pass along this rope, and are shewn on a dial-plate in the captain's cabin, or any other part of the ship. The rate of sailing is thus made known instantaneously, and with an approach to accuracy never before attained; and as we are informed, the rate of flow of streams and currents can be ascertained by the same instrument.

At Portsmouth, trial has been made of a ship's boat which, as is said, cannot sink even when full of water. A band of cork is fixed outside from end to end, just below the gunwale, which gives the requisite buoyancy, and then, by means of valves, the water inside can be reduced to the level of the water outside.—A boat by which horses or guns may be landed has been tried at Deptford dockyard. It has no keel; the bottom is rounded up at each end, and thus facilitates near approach to the shore; and the stern is a hinged flap, which, 'when drawn up and secured, forms a water-tight port, and when lowered, constitutes a platform between boat and shore, over which horses or guns may be embarked or landed.'

The seasoning of wood by artificial means seems to be a perennial question, for the old and effectual process of seasoning by long exposure to the air—in common with the old process of tanning—is too slow for the rapid spirit of the present day. Some inventors have sucked all the moisture out of timber by powerful machinery, others have boiled it out, and others have tried to force it out by forcing something else in. But none of these methods has proved satisfactory. Another is now put forward by Gardner & Son of Glasgow, who state that they dissolve the sap, extract it completely from the wood, and fill the place it occupied with a preservative substance 'in a very simple manner.' Their theory is, that they not only deprive the wood of its tendency to decay, but that they impart strength and density to the fibre, and render it non-inflammable, whatever may be the kind of wood or the purpose to which it is to be applied. Builders and constructors all over the world will rejoice at a demonstration that wood is no longer liable to dry-rot nor to fire.

Steel when long exposed to wear and tear is altered in structure, becomes crystallised and brittle. When in this condition, as has been proved by experiment, its strength and toughness can be restored by making the steel red hot and plunging it into cold water. Proper precautions are to be taken that the outside shall not cool much quicker than the inside, and then it will be found that the metal will bear a greater strain than before. What an opportunity is here afforded for restoring the strength of engine shafts, of axles and tires, to say nothing of the steel that enters so largely into machinery and constructive works generally.

Cannons of enormous size seem to be on the increase. Some time ago we made one of one hundred tons for the Italian government, and now we read of an order being contemplated for a gun of considerably larger dimensions—probably one

hundred and sixty tons. Where is this rage for colossal ordnance to stop!

A congress of Orientalists at St Petersburg, a congress of jurists and scholars on international law at Bremen, a geographical congress and a hygienic congress at Brussels, all within the last three months, may be taken as a sign of the times, and as evidence of a growing desire to find out true principles, and the best way of reducing them to practice. In the hygienic gathering much was said on the organisation of medical service for the field of battle, and it was shewn that much advantage would accrue if every soldier carried with him some simple surgical apparatus. 'Already,' said the speaker, Dr Appia of Geneva, 'the Germans have learned to take with them into action a little Esmarch bandage, and the French a morsel of lint.'

In a discussion on quarantine, Mr Hirsch contended that quarantine does not prevent the breaking out of epidemics. He had studied cholera on the Vistula, and found that the disease did not spread even in the absence of quarantine, and disappeared on the adoption of proper hygienic measures.

On the question of workmen's dwellings, Mr Jacquemyn of Ghent pointed out that it 'is not of unmixed benefit to the workman to be tied to one spot. Trade ebbs and flows, and a man may be left stranded in his cottage while the tide of business flows elsewhere. Moreover, workmen ought to be subject to the refining influences of a class above them. Their houses ought not to be placed together in one part of a city, for in that case the workmen's town might become a danger to the greater town in which it is built.'

Professor Esmarch of Kiel, whose name is above mentioned, ranks among the foremost surgeons of Europe. He stated recently, in addressing a meeting of German surgeons, that he regarded Lister's antiseptic treatment of wounds (which has been noticed in this *Journal*) as one of the most interesting surgical topics of the day. And speaking of operations on the battlefield, he said that they should be confined to the removal of limbs totally shattered by shell or cannon-ball; that almost all wounds of the extremities from rifle-balls permit of recovery under antiseptic dressings, whether the bones are injured or not. But if wounds are to heal without contamination they should not be touched by the surgeon's finger. The number of antiseptic remedies is increased, for bran, properly mixed with carbolic acid, is found beneficial as a dressing in cases of compound fracture of the bones: it limits suppuration, disinfects the discharge, and is 'germ' proof. And soft cotton wadding coated with tannin has been tried in Germany with marked success, particularly in injuries occasioned by machinery: it prevents inflammation, arrests capillary bleeding, and promotes the healing process.

As is pretty well known, the women of this country who wish to qualify themselves for the practice of medicine are placed at a disadvantage when compared with the women of the United States, who are at liberty to pursue the necessary studies in a college, to enter for examinations, and compete for the degree of Doctor of Medicine. But there is prospect of a change; for it is announced that the College of Physicians of Dublin are prepared to open their doors to women, and to

grant them a license if found qualified. Without offering any opinion on the subject of 'lady doctors,' we may infer that when so eminent a corporation as that of the Dublin physicians set the example just alluded to, we may conclude that it will ere long be followed in other parts of the kingdom.

America has taken the lead in many praiseworthy reforms: among the latest is the 'American Free Dress League,' which recently held meetings in Philadelphia. We are informed that 'they desire to abolish all unhealthy and cumbersome forms of female clothing, and to substitute styles which agree with the natural laws of hygiene.' Some of the ladies were clothed in the new style, which is described as 'loose-fitting trousers and sack.'

The return of the *Alert* and *Discovery* at the end of October from their exploration of the Polar Sea was a surprise. Sanguine geographers at first felt disappointed that the ships had not reached the Pole, but were consoled by the fact that but few lives had been lost, and that lands heretofore unknown had been discovered. Physicists and naturalists are hopeful that the observations of natural phenomena, the pendulum experiments, the collections of animals, plants, and fossils, will largely increase our knowledge of magnetism and meteorology, of the figure of the earth, and of the fauna and flora of the arctic regions. These collections, in addition to the enormous crop brought home by the *Challenger*, will, in the describing and classifying, furnish to our working naturalists some years of employment.

The highest latitude reached was $83^{\circ} 20' 26''$ N.; hence among all adventurers Englishmen may now claim to have been the nearest to the Pole. In 1827, Sir Edward Parry, on the Spitzbergen route, after strenuous endeavours to drag his boats during thirty-five days, was compelled to give up in $82^{\circ} 45'$. At this, their ultimate halting-place, a sounding of five hundred fathoms failed to reach the bottom; but the present party struck the bottom at seventy-two fathoms. From this remote spot, about four hundred miles from the Pole, no land could be seen in the north—nothing but ice of the most rugged and distorted description, over which it was not possible to travel more than a mile a day. So ends the speculation of an open Polar Sea. Instead of the rolling waves which Wrangell saw in 1823, the enterprising explorers of the *Alert* and *Discovery* saw ice eighty feet thick stretching away beyond the reach of vision.

The Conductors of CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL beg to direct the attention of CONTRIBUTORS to the following notice:

1st. All communications should be addressed to the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.

2d. To insure the return of papers that may prove indelible, postage-stamps should in every case accompany them.

3d. All MSS. should bear the author's full CHRISTIAN name, surname, and address, legibly written.

4th. MS. should be written on one side of the leaf only.

5th. Poetical offerings should be accompanied by an envelope, stamped and directed.

Unless Contributors comply with the above rules, the Editor cannot undertake to return indelible papers.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.